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JOSEPH PIERRE
NUYTTENS

PEN PORTRAIT BY HIM-
SELF

The War Lords of Europe in Pen Portraiture

The Work of a Belgian Artist—Joseph Pierre Nuyttens

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

THE BLOOD red star of militarism which is now in the ascendant above the battlefields of Europe has served to shed, upon at least one of the countries involved, a glory untarnished by blame. No matter what the cause or where the culpability for the European catastrophe, one land and one people at least have the sympathy of the world and it is scarcely neces-

sary to add that the name of this country is Belgium and the people "the bravest of the Gauls."

In a day when the sword of Belgium has been again unsheathed to fame it seems singularly appropriate to present to the reading public the works of a Belgian pen, especially when the subjects of these unique and interesting sketches are the leading actors in



WILLIAM II EMPEROR
OF GERMANY

PEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS

the present great world tragedy. One hardly knows whether to speak first of the men presented or the man presenting them and his original methods.

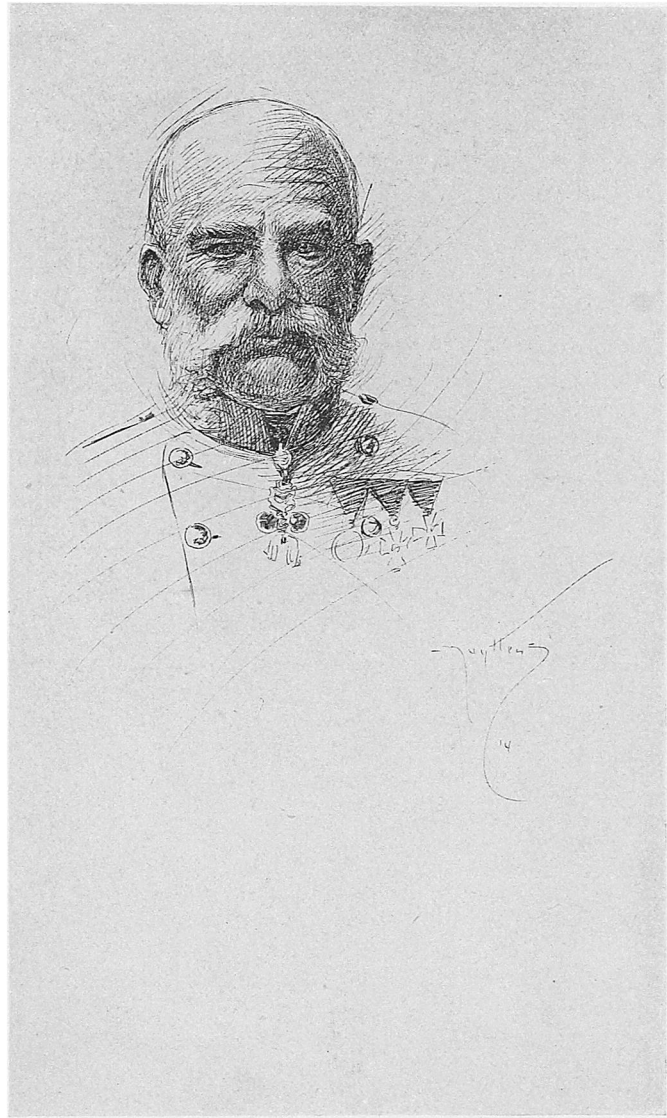
However, inasmuch as the subjects of these portraits are already so well known and the pictures speak for themselves, a short introduction to the artist is not inopportune. Some few years ago Chicago's art lovers awoke with surprise to the fact that

after all there was something new under the sun, that even in art everything had not been done before and that there yet remained novel methods of producing pictorial effects.

This awakening was brought about when at the opening performance of a Chicago Grand Opera Company a number of portraits of the principal performers were exhibited in the foyer of the Auditorium The-

FRANZ JOSEPH EMPEROR
OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

PEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS



atre. These remarkable pen drawings in color were the work of Joseph Pierre Nuytens, who had received the commission to prepare these portraits upon his return from study in Paris. Subsequently they were exhibited at the Art Institute, where they excited considerable interest and appreciation among artists and critics. This exhibition was followed by that of a larger collection of the works of this artist both in

pen and crayon at the Anderson Galleries, and one of the army of young men who are always toiling unseen in the midst of our great cities achieved in this season the heights of recognition and reknown.

Of all mediums open to the choice of the artist, pen and ink would perhaps be regarded as most limited in scope and least adequate for the purposes of full expression. "Sketch" has been the inevitable ac-



KING ALBERT OF
BELGIUM

PEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS

companionment of the words pen and ink for so long that it was surprising to find that the portraits of Nuyttens were not sketches but pictures wherein line was subordinated to values, masses, and color. There is much more of the suggestion of a colored etching or even of a water color about these works of Nuyttens than there is of pen and ink as generally employed and understood. Indeed this is the last impression which these

rich and exquisitely tinted portraits convey.

Flesh tones are accomplished through pen strokes of such infinite delicacy as to possess much of the smoothness of wash, though they impart more character. The range of his hues and tones is as varied and as lovely as the palette of a water colorist and they do not suggest insipidity and sweetness which are often the drawbacks of the latter.

KING GEORGE VI OF
ENGLANDPEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS

Most singularly successful of all Mr. Nuyttens' achievements with the pen are those which he has worked out on celluloid, resulting in pictures which rival the delicacy and beauty of miniatures on ivory.

The pen rests naturally and is at home in his fingers perhaps by reason of heredity and early training, for by birth and education this artist is a draughtsman, descended from a family of Belgian engineers, and

himself trained, with old world thoroughness, to their profession. Mr. Nuyttens was born in Antwerp and has three brothers in the Belgian army. These young men, like their father before them, are trained engineers, and the transition of Joseph Pierre from engineer to artist reminds one a bit of Saint Gaudens' rise from goldsmith to sculpture in bronze.

While pursuing his engineering course



NICHOLAS II CZAR OF
RUSSIA

PEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS

Mr. Nuyttens attended night school for the purpose of studying art, which early cast the spell of its enchantment about him. In 1894, while still a young lad, he took first prize in engineering for mechanical construction, and the set of draughtsman's tools which he received upon this occasion is still a prized possession, its leather case well worn by loving hands. Although Mr. Nuyttens has painted in water colors and

in oils and worked in crayon and pastel, the pen has always remained the dearest as it was the first love of his singular talent. Experiment brought in the use of colors which grew and extended from two to three and four and finally to the full palette of nature and art.

As an artist, indeed, he is largely self made and self taught, for although he acquired the essentials of art through study in

POINCARE PRESIDENT
OF FRANCE

PEN PORTRAIT BY
NUYTTENS



the recognized schools of Europe and America, he has worked out his own theories and problems in a new and unacademic way. Like the old masters, he mixes his own colors, for he has been obliged to make the inks which he uses, the singular character of his work not being provided for by commerce.

Mr. Nuyttens approached portraits through the medium of illustration, which

gave him the necessary expertness in the handling of the human figure and in the interpretation of emotion and character as portrayed in the varying expressions of the face. His portraits are remarkable for rare fidelity and insight, no less than for graceful composition, exquisite drawing and color.

The pictures herewith presented are worthy of careful examination and of some

comment upon points which render more clear our understanding of the character of the subjects. The portrait of the Czar, for example, while it may be idealized, is more true to one's natural conception of the ruler of the Russians than a more literal rendering might be. There is more of dignity and strength about this picture than one usually feels in portraits of this monarch and perhaps it might be said to represent the best of the man and of his cause.

King George, in the portrait which we here illustrate, is revealed in a pose which brings out all of his resemblance to Edward VII. With both of these monarchs sketches of the head alone convey a greater impression of dignity than could full length portraits, inasmuch as neither of them is regal in stature or bearing.

With King Albert of Belgium the reverse is true, and yet one feels the magnificance of physique of this ideal hero and king, even in a sketch of the head and shoulders. King Albert, who is exceedingly tall and of fine physique, is said to be an exceptionally noble figure on horseback. He is also remarkable as the only monarch of Europe who does not, and will not, wear medals and decorations bestowed on himself by himself or presented in exchange by fellow princes. It might be remarked that to judge from Mr. Nuyttens' portrait, medals and decorations are unnecessary, the nobility of nature and the innate manliness of this democratic monarch being apparent in every line and feature.

In striking contrast to this handsome young monarch is the aged Franz Joseph, the pitiful cause of the present terrible con-

flict, although one may indeed forgive an old man in his eighties for cherishing the by-gone ideals of the divine rights of kings.

The Kaiser's well known fighting face, bristling with fierce mustaches, shows something of the worry and strain of the uncertain fortunes of the Fatherland, in the hollows about the eyes and the drawn cheek. For all that he is a fine soldierly figure and one which we cannot disassociate from the militarism of his country.

President Poincare's face is less familiar and his portrait is perhaps the more interesting. Mr. Nuyttens presents him as a quiet and capable man with the broad practical brow of one who can safely be trusted with the affairs of a great nation. He seems a thoughtful, reliable type not easily to be swayed by emotions.

Of equal interest with the portraits of these rulers of the warring nations is the self portrait of the artist which is indeed a striking likeness. The broad forehead and temples indicate great constructive ability and yet the face possesses the imaginative quality of the lover and creator of beauty, the delicately formed mouth indicating the aesthetic nature of the man.

Mr. Nuyttens is a hard working and prolific artist, who, unlike most possessors of the artistic temperament, is happiest when hardest at work. He is at present engaged in preparing a series of one thousand pictures, portraits of theatrical stars and other charming subjects of a light and pleasing character, imaginative sketches and studies from life, for the decoration of the apartments of the Congress Hotel and Annex.